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AR 11749

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Hans Moldenhaver Collection

1961-1979

Archives

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
SEATTLE 5

February 6, 1961

Dear Mr. Heiman:

Moving to Seattle at the turn of the year, setting up office and an apartment, getting the work under way, and commuting every second weekend back to Spokane for a four-day "marathon" of work -- all these circumstances have kept me from answering your kind letter of December 24 any earlier.

Let me thank you, if only belatedly, for the interesting report on your trip to Israel and Europe. Apparently, you had a wonderful time, and I hope that you and your family may make the journey all over before too long.

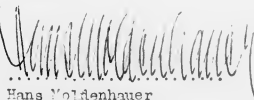
Thank you also for your nice words on my article in The Times. The book has reached the second proof stage in the meantime, and publication should follow within two months or so. Just this morning, I mailed the material for the German version off to Munich. I am confident that you will be pleased with the manner in which the complex matter is being presented to the public. Certainly, yours is the key position in the unveiling of the tragedy, and it is for this reason that your picture will be included among the eight or ten illustrations which will accompany the text. Your interest in this case, dating from the time that you acted as interpreter on the spot, and sustained through the period of my research, will permanently be a credit to you, and - without ever intending it - you have linked your name with musical literature and, more specifically, with the biography of Anton Webern.

My work at the State University is gathering momentum and includes a continuing series of exhibitions from my manuscript archive. Seattle is beautifully located, and we have enjoyed balmy weather while we read about the rigid winter which the East has to endure.

I hope to hear again from you. You can write either to my Spokane address or care of the University's School of Music.

With all good wishes for you and your family, I remain,

Cordially,



Hans Voldenhauer



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
SEATTLE, 5

January 23, 1962

Dear Mr. Heiman:

At long last, the Webern death documentary has come out in book form. It gives me great pleasure to ask the publishers, Philosophical Library of New York, to forward a copy to you. Please accept it with my compliments and in sincere appreciation for the key role which you have assumed in my research.

I hope that you like the book and the reproduction of your countenance.

From the New York Times articles, Sept. 4 and 17, you will have learned that there has been a sequel to the story, and the third stage, a big Webern Festival in Seattle, has me jumping again since I was made Festival Chairman. How about coming out to take in the Festival and the World's Fair at the same time? Festival dates are May 25-28.

Please continue to address me in Spokane as before since I am doing much of my work right at home.

Cordial regards,

Sincerely yours,

  
.....  
Hans Moldenhauer

		DR. HANS MOLDENHAUER		
		808 South Lincoln Street		
		Spokane 4, Washington		

February 19, 1962

Dr. W. S. Moldenhauer  
308 South Lincoln Street  
Apartment 4, Wash.

Dear Dr. Moldenhauer,

Returning from an out-of-town trip I found about a week ago your book "The death of Anton Webern", which I had eagerly awaited after your letter of January 23.

I am amazed at the amount of work and dedication you have contributed, and it is now as much a monument to V. N. Webern as to your efforts. -

I thank you wholeheartedly for the gift which transcends mere thank you gestures, especially since I am now linked with this tragic artist.

- As soon as possible I shall comment on some details; first - should like to digest the book properly.

Always let me know occasionally when I can buy German edition.

Little surely said to an interesting place to visit, but I am afraid it is out of reach for me in 1962. I sincerely hope that the Webern Festival under your sponsorship will be a great success.

Cordially yours,



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the book  
is

THE  
DEATH  
OF  
ANTON  
WEBER

BY

HANS MOLDENTHAUER

\$4.50

## The Death of Anton Webern

by HANS MOLDENHAUER

The circumstances surrounding the violent death of the noted Austrian composer, Anton Webern, occurring on September 15, 1945 in the Tyrolean village of Mittersill, have constituted an enigma from the beginning. Over the years, various attempts were made to establish the exact details of the fateful shooting, but neither individual research nor official endeavor could produce any pertinent information. A growing number of legends heightened the mystery.

A chance visit to Mittersill in 1959 prompted the author to strike out on his own in search of truth. The present book attests to the completeness of his success. In establishing the exact circumstances of Anton Webern's death, Dr. Moldenhauer's documentary will henceforth serve as the basis of historical fact in the biography of

*(continued on back flap)*

## WEBERN FESTIVAL BEGINS IN SEATTLE

1904 Work Given Premiere  
by Philadelphia Orchestra

By HAROLD C. SCHONBERG

Special to The New York Times.

SEATTLE, May 26—The first International Webern Festival was inaugurated last night with the world premiere of the Austrian composer's "Im Sommerwind."

Eugene Ormandy led the Philadelphia Orchestra at the Seattle Opera House and even made a speech after the concert. He mentioned the importance of Anton von Webern and then introduced the composer's eldest daughter, Mrs. Amalie Webern Waller, who had been brought from Europe for the occasion.

It is the University of Washington School of Music that is sponsoring the festival. The Philadelphia Orchestra's concert could be considered the opening event, though, strictly speaking, it was a Seattle World's Fair attraction. Mr. Ormandy included the Webern work as a tribute to the festival.

This morning, at the university grounds, the serious business started with a scholars' symposium attended by specialists from all over the country. There will be additional symposiums, concerts, lectures, lunches and exhibitions during the three-day festival, which ends tomorrow.

The genesis of the festival came with Dr. Hans Moldenhauer, whose book on Webern's death was recently published. Dr. Moldenhauer, who is on the Music Faculty of the University of Washington, came across several manuscripts of unpublished Webern music while engaged in research for his book.

### Music All Unplayed

All of this music is now part of the archives of musical manuscripts and documents that Dr. Moldenhauer is assembling for the university. None of the Webern material—all of it, incidentally, antedating the composer's first published work—had ever been played in public. This includes a series of songs and two quartet movements. It was agreed that they be presented to the public in the form of a festival.

Webern, of course, has been an extraordinary influence on contemporary music since his death in 1945. And ever since Igor Stravinsky has given his benediction, Webern has started to become accepted by the intellectual audience the world over. Stravinsky has sent a message to the chairman of the festival: "Webern is the future of music."

—translated as the righteous man of music—"and I do not hesitate to shelter myself by the beneficent protection of his not yet canonized art."

As one of Arnold Schoenberg's two most famous pupils—the other was Alban Berg—Webern adopted his master's twelve tone technique. But, unlike Schoenberg and Berg, he did not write big. He wrote small, trying for more and more concentration. He also attempted to serialize many aspects of music—including rhythm and timbre as well as the notes themselves.

Webern's music is very complicated, dissonant and, to conservative ears, unmelodic. It may be that his appeal never will be widespread. But his theories, his workmanship and the unusually delicate quality of his tonal combinations have hypnotized a good segment of composers here and abroad during the past decade. He can be considered the greatest single musical influence of the period.

The festival, which apparently is the first of its kind, will present about half of his total output (Webern was not a prolific composer), performed by faculty musicians and a few visitors.

There also will be a recital of piano music by post-Webern composers. This will close the festival with a look toward the future, for it will illustrate the influence of Webern on such composers as Stockhausen, Babbitt and others.

As for last night's "Im Sommerwind," so brilliantly performed by Mr. Ormandy and his orchestra, it is a product of Webern's twenty-first year. He had not yet developed his later condensed style, and was under the influence of Wagner and Richard Strauss, plus the Schoenberg of "Gurrelieder." Some César Franck comes into play, too, for the opening suggests "Les Eolides."

The work is a twelve-minute symphonic poem based on a text by Bruno Wille. It is what

one might expect from a very talented student in 1904, and it follows a pattern. Schoenberg's early music pays its respect to Wagner and Strauss, and Berg's Op. One, a piano sonata, is strongly Tristanesque.

Thus the Webern score is equally derivative. But it does have brilliance, color and a good deal of personality, and it helps round out the picture of the man who eventually was to compose the tiny, disciplined, superbly organized pieces that were so strongly to influence the generation after his death.

## HARM SEEN IN AID TO CHURCH SCHOOLS

A former official of the National Education Association said yesterday that public funds for parochial schools would undermine the schools' "independence and integrity, and harm religious freedom."

Dr. Howard Dawson, executive secretary emeritus of the Department of Rural Education of the N.E.A., made the statement at the regional annual meeting of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. The meeting was held at the Union Theological Seminary, 120th Street and Broadway.

Dr. Dawson challenged the contention that parents of parochially taxed. He said the argument failed to distinguish "between what is a tax and what is a voluntary contribution to a cause selected by the individual."

In this connection, he said, freedom of speech "does not obligate the Government to set up a forum, provide a hall and invite all the public to hear anyone who has a speech to make."

"Likewise," he added, "the Government is under no obligation to buy, rent or furnish a printing press for any person, no matter how pure his motives."

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# Concert: Webern's Rarefied World

By HAROLD C. SCHONBERG

About 10 years ago the music of Anton Webern was played all over New York—in the big halls as well as at small avant-garde groupings. Since then he has faded a bit. The younger composers are not that interested in his kind of serial composition, though of course he has remained one of the more potent influences of the century.

Anyway, Arthur Weisberg and his Contemporary Chamber Ensemble presented a Homage to Webern on Friday evening in Carnegie Hall. In a way it was a retrospective, extending from Webern's early days to the Variations for Orchestra of 1940. Vocal, violin and orchestral music was sampled, before a predominantly young audience that also contained some of America's most distinguished composers.

And once again it was possible to enter Webern's world—Webern's strange, microcosmic world. It is a world of condensation, brevity (is there anything shorter in the entire literature than the third of the Five Pieces, which runs only a few seconds?), unusual colors, pointillistic effects, silences, ethereal pianissimos, atonalism, new methods of musical organization.

The man was a master, even if his music has not been able to establish a popular base. It is much too rarefied for that. Yet, judging from the rapt attention it received from its listeners at this concert, Webern obviously has a message for the younger generation. Perhaps his time has come.

Webern's music, after all, has been around since almost

## The Program

**HOMAGE TO WEBERN**, with the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, Arthur Weisberg conducting, Bethany Beardslee, soprano; Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano; Gilbert Kalish, piano; Jeanne Benjamin, violin. At Carnegie Hall.

Webern: Three Poems for Voice and Piano, Op. 24; Five Songs for Voice and Orchestra (Op. 13); Symphony (Op. 21); Three Early Songs; Three Songs for Voice and Piano; Poems by Hindemith, Op. 25; Five Pieces for Orchestra (Op. 25); Four Pieces for Violin and Piano (Op. 7); Five Sacred Songs (Op. 15); Variations for Orchestra (Op. 30).

the turn of the century, and by now the textures and workmanship have entered the musical subconscious. Certainly pieces like the Variations are reflected in every other postserial work composed these days—and even in works that are not serial.

Two vocal soloists shared the program. Jan DeGaetani and Bethany Beardslee are specialists in avant-garde music, and they both sang with complete identification with all stylistic elements. Miss DeGaetani sang the early, Wagnerian, Three Poems, with Gilbert Kalish at the piano, and the Four Songs with orchestral accompaniment. Miss Beardslee, who was a pioneer in the movement, was heard in the "Dehmel" Songs, also with

Mr. Kalish, and the Five Sacred Songs (Op. 15).

These impeccable artists sang with infinite nuance. They are so attuned to the Webern intervals and dynamics that their work sounded no more difficult than if they were singing Schubert or Brahms. In any case these songs do look back to the previous century, advanced as Opus 15 is, and the two singers approached the music simply as music. One was not conscious of "modernism" or "atonalism" or anything else but the projection of line for maximum expressive effect.

Mr. Weisberg conducted his sharp little ensemble in the Concerto (Op. 24), the Symphony (Op. 21), the Five Pieces (Op. 10) and the Variations (Op. 30). The playing was smooth, expert, integrated. By now Mr. Weisberg and his players can approach Webern with the nonchalance of the Philadelphia Orchestra playing Tchaikovsky. Also on the program were the four tiny Pieces for Violin and Piano (Op. 7), delicately played by Jeanne Benjamin (the concertmaster of the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble) and Mr. Kalish.

## BLEY LEADS SCORPIO IN A JAZZ CONCERT

Paul Bley, a pianist whose career for the last dozen or more years has been spent on the far out fringes of jazz, seems to be moving toward a more direct, easily assimilable form of music. His concert, Thursday evening with his four-piece group, Scorpio, in Columbia University's Wollman Auditorium, was full of surprisingly romantic ideas and, by and large, a forthright, swinging approach.

With strong support from Steve Khan on guitar, Dave

Holland on bass and Bruce Dittmas on drums, Mr. Bley moved between acoustic and electric pianos. He used the acoustic piano for clean, uncluttered, deeply resonant and provocatively melodic lines. The electric piano he made a much more viable instrument than it often seems, by avoiding the shrill, staticlike tinkle commonly produced on it.

The quartet was a tight, closely knit unit. And Mr. Bley's keyboard work was often just one of the contributing colors to its ensemble playing, which gained steady direction and drive from Mr. Holland's excellent bass playing.

JOHN S. WILSON

# Music

"Could Webern's entire esthetic be traced to his—and his generation's—yearning for a return to 'discipline' and 'law and order'?" (Donal Henahan)

## MUSIC VIEW

DONAL HENAHAN

### The Painful Facts of Webern's Blindness to Nazi Oppression



Anton Webern at 20.

Does it matter that Mozart wrote vulgar letters to his wife, that Beethoven drove his nephew to attempt suicide, or that Wagner was a deadbeat? Obviously most of us think so, or biographies of composers would not be so popular with the public or treated so seriously by scholars. Somehow, we are convinced that how an artist lives, and when and where, has something to do with the artist's works, even though the relationship may be shadowy or totally baffling. But exactly to what extent are the facts of Beethoven's tortured personal history reflected in, say, the "Hammerklavier" Sonata? Lately I have been worrying this old question as it applies to the music of Anton Webern, whose life and work are the subjects of a massive biography written by Hans and Rosalee Moldenhauer and recently published by Knopf.

This is in every way a big book, 803 pages thick as I probably the last word on the composer. At first it could strike you as wry that the career of Webern, a famously ironic and epigrammatic composer, should inspire an 800-page book. The Moldenhauers, who for 30 years have been building up the most important Webern archives in the world, might appear to have simply emptied out their file and called the result a biography. In fact, however, we have here not only an exhaustive and probably definitive study of Webern's life and music but an engrossing case history of one man's moral surrender under 20th-century stress. In spite of its scholarly apparatus, this biography can almost be read like a Thomas Mann novel. Hints of "Doctor Faustus" lie all about.

Strangely, this composer of precise, terse and unequivocal music was a waverer in most other matters. He could not bring himself to stand up against the Nazis when they began persecuting his Jewish colleagues in the 1930's, and he did not leave Germany or in any other significant way demonstrate repugnance to Hitler's regime. On March 12, 1938, when the swastika was raised over Austria, he wrote to a friend: "I am totally immersed in my work and cannot, cannot be disturbed." His patriotism began to flag after Allied bombs began falling on his homeland in 1943, but he remained a good, docile German until the day he died in 1945,

Harold C. Schonberg is on vacation.

when he was shot by an American soldier who apparently mistook him for a blackmarket operator.

Webern's blindness to the nastiness of the Third Reich has never been a secret, but it still comes as a shock to see the story spelled out so vividly by the Moldenhauers. Their account is especially painful because they clearly sympathize with the dilemma of Webern as an Aryan artist trapped between love of country and fidelity to his Jewish colleagues, among them his teacher and idol Arnold Schoenberg. It is no doubt an ameliorating fact that Schoenberg, who left Germany and finally settled in Hollywood, never openly blamed Webern for his opinions or turned against him in his letters. However, their correspondence, which had been dwindling, was cut off when the United States entered the war in 1941.

Webern seems to have subscribed to a kind of selective anti-Semitism, believing until it was dramatically proved otherwise that the works of certain Jewish artists such as Schoenberg and Mahler would be exempt from Nazi wrath. Above all, however, his commitment was to the new 12-tone musical language that he, Schoenberg and Berg had been perfecting, and which the Nazis outlawed as degenerate art. The reader hardly knows whether to laugh or cry when Webern plaintively says to a friend in 1936 or 1937: "One should attempt to convince the Hitler regime of the rightness of the 12-tone system." The Moldenhauers mark down this kind of remark to Webern's "blind optimism," and one would have to agree. A more Panglossian project would be hard to conceive.

Webern's political naïveté and capacity for self-delusion, which the authors term "as incredible in retrospect as it was tragic," are lavishly documented. Consider these lines written to his friend Josef Huebner on March 4, 1940, after a reading of "Mein Kampf": "What I see at present makes me supremely confident! I see it coming, the pacification [sic] of the entire world. At first east of the Rhine as far as — yes, how far? This will depend on the USA. But probably as far as the Pacific Ocean! Yes, I believe this, I do believe, and I cannot see it any other way!" Webern also divines in a poem of Stefan George a "doctrine" that foretells the rise of Germany under Hitler. George's outburst of neo-Nietzschean doggerel translates as: "He bursts the chains, he sweeps order back into ruined sites, he scourges home the lost to the eternal law where the great is great again, master again master, discipline again discipline, he fastens the true symbol on the people's banner, he leads, through storm and the awful signals of his faithful troops' early dawn, onward to the work of the full day, and plants the new empire."

Of all music, we are told, Webern loved Mahler's best. But rather soon in the Hitler days he found that a bust of the Jewish composer, which had held a prominent place in the Webern living room, could be more suitably enshrined in a book room. In perhaps his most overt stand against the Nazi terror, he insisted on taking a detour to avoid having to see a burned-out synagogue after the "Kristallnacht" pogrom of Nov. 9, 1938. We are told further that Webern quietly helped certain Jews to obtain passports.

But what, the exasperated admirer of Webern's exquisitely reasoned serial works might demand, does all this biographical trivia have to do with the music itself? Surely, one must remember Ezra Pound's rule: You can always tell the good critic from the bad one because the one talks about the poem and the other talks about the poet. The New Critics in literature, who made themselves felt after World War II at about the same time that Webern's brand of serialism came to rule music, felt much the same way, and they have their counterparts among writers on music. But Pound's rule must be taken with 16 ounces of salt, at least. Yes, Webern's

music is important in itself, probably as influential as the music of any composer in the last 50 years. But no, an artist's work cannot be genuinely understood apart from the artist and the cultural climate in which it was produced. Pound, of course, leaned to simplistic solutions: in politics he thought the Fascists would save civilization.

To indulge in provocative speculation for a moment, what would you say to the possibility that Webern's entire esthetic, and hence the ruling esthetic of the musical culture that defied him after World War II, could be traced directly to his—and his generation's—yearning for a return to "discipline" and "order." His reaction to the Stefan George poem suggests as much. He was not the only composer to feel this way, merely the most rigorously analytical one. The music of Schoenberg, Webern's master, certainly shows an increasingly obsessive concern for law and order in the two chaotic decades leading up to World War II, when Dada and other artistic anarchies were running amok. Webern, too, after a few years of comparatively luxurious Romantic writing, began to compress and athesize, finally becoming the paragon of musical economy. One can play through all his mature works in the time it takes to read a couple of Moldenhauer chapters.

From a safe distance, of course, it is easy to impose our version of morality on the good Germans of the 1930's. What looks now like simple cowardice may have been then, as the Moldenhauers would insist, a paralyzing moral confusion. Bravery in such circumstances is not as easy to pinpoint as in such structured and regulated forms of violence as sol-

'Strangely, this composer of precise, terse and unequivocal music was a waverer in most other matters. He could not bring himself to stand up against the Nazis when they began persecuting his Jewish colleagues in the 1930's.'

derly combat. In Germany during the 1930's, bravery and cowardice were measured daily, but in small cups, and often it could not have been easy to tell immediately which was which. A German such as Webern, with his aristocratic background and strong sense of his country's cultural dominance, slid quietly into cowardice, not so much by making decisions as by ignoring the need to. Before he could grasp what was happening, his Jewish friends and their families, and many of his Aryan friends, too, had gone, leaving him and the Nazis to hold aloft the "people's banner," with its strangely twisted device.

Hans Moldenhauer became immersed in Webern's career in 1959 when his researches solved the long-standing puzzle about how the composer died. This biography therefore places understandable emphasis on the misfortune of Webern's death just as his music was on the verge of becoming a powerful force. With as much justification, however, the documentation also stresses the tragedy of Webern's life: He was forced to choose between patriotism and friendship, and the lower principle won out.



**End of Hans Moldenhauer Collection**

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